

Good News

April 2020



Newsletter of The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Our Saviour
420 North Progress Avenue
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17109

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As I write this article, our world is in the midst of the Coronavirus outbreak. The epicenter of the outbreak has moved from China to Europe to the United States. Hundreds of thousands of people have been infected. Tens of thousands have died. Businesses have closed, and the economy has taken a nosedive. Schools have closed. Kids are at home and families are scared they won't be able to make ends meet. Churches, included ours, have cancelled worship services. And everyone, I mean EVERYONE, seems to be on "edge." All anyone talks about is "Coronavirus" this and "Coronavirus" that. And, please, PLEASE understand, I don't want to downplay the significance of what is going on.

But so much is going on in our world right now, that we may even have lost sight of the fact that we are in the midst of the holy season of Lent and almost to Easter. We may have even forgotten that we are journeying with our Lord toward the great mystery of our faith—the suffering, death, and resurrection of our Lord. We may have forgotten that God is good all the time. All the time God is good.

Let me share with you an experience that recently provided me with solace. Let me share with you an experience that jarred me awake from this stupor our world seems to be living in. At council this past month, each of the members of council went around the room to share where we have seen God recently. And it was a powerful experience. From that exercise, we realized that God has not forgotten us. We realized that God is still very much active in the world and in our lives. We realized that God is God and we are his creatures, and as Romans 8:37-39 says, "Nothing will separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Nothing, not in heaven above nor on earth below, not angels of glory nor rulers of nations, not even death itself, not even the Coronavirus, can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus."

With everyone's anxiety so ratcheted up because of fear, sisters and brother in Christ, we forget to slow down and to stop and to realize that life is going on and God is still active amidst our very lives. Fear makes it hard for us to see to God. And so that is why I remind you, to pause and to think about where you have seen God act work in the course of your day. Do this every day. Take time to recognize the fact that God is present. And not only be attuned to God's presence around you, but also be aware of the fact that through your life, your interactions, your word and deeds, you also reveal the presence of God to others.

This is what our news media is short on—telling us that God is still present among us. Sure, the news headlines are all about telling us about the spread of the disease, the precautions we need to take, so on and so forth. And, the news hits us over and over again with the power of fear. But remember, the news media relies on us watching the news, and what makes us watch the news is the emotional attachment we have to the news. Don't get me wrong, we need to be informed. But we don't need to be made incapacitated by fear. So also do yourself a favor, and instead of giving an inordinate amount of time to the news, devote some time to prayer. Pray for the world, for health workers, for those sick and dying. Pray for children, families, and those dealing with the economic fallout of this crisis. And most of all pray that fear may not rule the day. Pray for people then that they might see the face of God in one another, and thus that they may know of the presence of God still with us.

I pray that these words may be of help for you in this time. May God's love strengthen you in faith this day and always.

In Christ, *Pastor Joel Petruschke*

The Lessons for April 2020

April 5 — Palm Sunday

Matthew 21:1-11
Isaiah 50:4-9a
Psalm 31:9-16
Philippians 2:5-11
Matthew 26:14-27

April 9 — Maundy Thursday

Exodus 12:1-14
Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19
1 Corinthians 11:23-26
John 13:1-17, 31b-35

April 10 — Good Friday

Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12
Psalm 22
Hebrews 10:16-25
John 18:1 - 19:42

April 12 — Easter Day

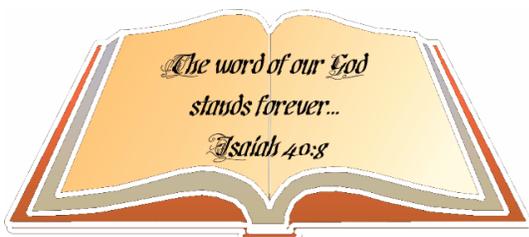
Acts 10:34-43
Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
Colossians 3:1-4
Matthew 28:1-10

April 19 — Easter 2

Acts 2:14a, 22-32
Psalm 16
1 Peter 1:3-9
John 20:19-31

April 26 — Easter 3

Acts 2:14a, 36-41
Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19
1 Peter 1:17-23
Luke 24:13-35



Join Us For Our Holy Week and Easter Sunday Worship!

Please Note: These services are contingent upon us being able to resume services once we are over this Covid-19 virus. Additional information about possibly viewing these services on –line will be forthcoming in e-mails.

Palm Sunday Worship April 5th
8:30 am and 10:45 am



Maundy Thursday Worship April 9th
7:00 pm



Good Friday Tenebrae Service
April 10th 7:00 pm



Easter Vigil @Good Shepherd, Saturday,
April 11th 7:30 pm

Easter Sunday Worship April 12th
7:00 am and 10:45 am



Parish Staff

Joel D. Petruschke, pastor
Barbara Johnson, administrative assistant

Good News is a monthly publication of **The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Our Saviour**, 420 North Progress Avenue, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17109, 717-545-9992, ossec@comcast.net. **Deadline** for submission is the third Monday prior to publication month.

If you do not have email or internet access, your addressed copy of *Good News* will be available in your church mailbox the first weekend of each month.

About Worship

So I had a question the other day from a parishioner about whether a person could take Holy Communion alone by him or herself (what I would call “solo Communion”), because of the Coronavirus outbreak. You see, this parishioner has some underlying health conditions. And so, this parishioner is not comfortable having the pastor stop by to bring Communion. And with worship being suspended for the time being, there is no way to come to church and receive Communion. So what is one supposed to do? Can a person give themselves Holy Communion?

It is a good question. And I didn’t have an answer. Under ordinary circumstances, it is NOT appropriate to take Communion by one’s self, because Communion is by its very definition meant to be celebrated as a “community.” That is part of the theology surrounding Communion. But, these are not ordinary circumstances. And so, I told this parishioner that I would call the Bishop and find out.

In talking with the Bishop, he affirmed that indeed he was NOT authorizing the practice of “solo Communion”. He stressed to me that Baptism is sufficient for grace in such times, that we can remember our Baptism and know that God sustains us by God’s grace. Furthermore, he noted that there was a time in the life of the Church when Holy Communion was withheld during Lent as a way for believers to appreciate all the more this gift from God in Holy Communion. The hope, he said, is that soon enough we can all get back to our regular routine of worship. But until then, we have to be patient, for eventually this too shall pass.

I would also add that short of blessing the bread and wine and giving one’s self Communion, maybe simply reading the passages where Communion is celebrated by Jesus and his disciples can be of comfort for our spirits. It might, in fact, be of greater comfort to read the Passion of Jesus in its entirety, as we do on Palm Sunday, remembering that the rite of Holy Communion is intimately connected to the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. With that in mind, here are the passages for your consideration, with the institution of the Lord’s Supper in brackets: Matthew 26:14-27:66 [26:26-29]; Mark 14:1-15:47 [14:22-25]; Luke 22:14-23:56 [22:14-23]; and John 13:1-19:42 [No institution of the Lord’s Supper].

We Still Have Eggs

To members and friends of Our Saviour Lutheran Church. Due to the devastation of the corona virus and all the problems to follow, we have stopped making Easter eggs. Unfortunately we have hundreds of eggs to sell. Please remember that they do very well if frozen. We made 13,914 eggs. Thank you very much to every one who helped in any way. Peanut butter always sell the most and this year the semi sweet chocolate used for the coconut and butter cream eggs were a huge hit. A special thanks to Barb for filling orders for us in this difficult time. Stay safe, trust in the Lord and stay a thome.

Respectfully, Julie Drake, Chair Bunny and Connie Johnson - Co chair



A Word on Stewardship

It is amazing to me. It is amazing to me, how something like a virus, something so small, so tiny, can rock the world's economy like it has. The markets have fluctuated, like some wild roller coaster, up and down. But for the most part they have trended sharply down. It is amazing to me.

One of things I have been hearing lately is that this event may very well create a new norm for how people conduct business in the future. It might be that because of this outbreak of the Coronavirus, and the subsequent call for "social distancing," that more companies in the future will build this concept into their business model. In other words, companies are going to adapt so that they will be able to weather storms like this in the future. More companies will conduct their business on-line via video conferencing, and the like. Will schools do more of this, too, in the future? Forget about classrooms where students gather, students will now do everything in front of screens. And, will churches go in this same direction, where a live feed through video streaming will come right into our living rooms?

Although I understand the need for "social distancing" in critical situations, we must remember people are still people. And one of the things that makes us "people" is our need to gather together as people. God said that "Where two or three gather, I am there among them" (Matt. 18:20). I do think we need to remember the importance of community, and can't lose sight of this after this Coronavirus scare has gone away.

The stewardship of "gathering" is something I had not thought a lot about before this Coronavirus outbreak, but you can be sure it has been on my mind ever since. We have recorded worship in an empty nave and then provided it on YouTube for our members to view. People have commented how well they like the videos, and I agree that Herb has done an excellent job. I hope, however, that when we come back together to worship again in our nave, we will see just how important worship is as a "gathering." Human contact, human interaction, is so vital. It is so valuable to whom we are as God's people.

I can't imagine a world where "social distancing" becomes more and more the norm. Such a world in my estimation would be a borderline, if not a full-fledge, dystopia. Such a world would really go against what we are as human beings who need to gather. Hopefully, we will come to appreciate this aspect of the human race and not go down that dark alley where "social distancing" becomes the norm.

A Stewardship Message

Dear Our Saviour Members,

I hope that all of you are well during these trying times.

We are experiencing an unprecedented global pandemic that has touched each of us in some way, such as at present we are unable to worship and congregate on Sunday morning. Regardless of our physical attendance on Sunday, the love and generosity of our members continues to be a wonderful blessing. In fact, over the past two weeks, we have received some weekly contributions via mail, and we wanted to express a sincere thank you.

It is important to note that Our Saviour is quite blessed with a strong financial portfolio through the generosity of members and friends of Our Saviour. This current financial strength allows us to cover current operating expenses for the near-term. However, we are reaching out to let our members know that in these times of financial uncertainty, we encourage each of you to be thoughtful in your contributions. Indeed, we understand if you are unable to contribute at this time, and you should not feel obligated to give.

Please note, contributions which are dropped off at the church or received via mail are secure. Your generosity is much appreciated, and by God's grace we will persevere.

May God bless all of us.

Sincerely,

John Zimmerman, OSL Council President

Jim Lubrecht, OSL Treasurer

If you are dropping off your offering envelopes may we suggest you either:

- 1) drop them in the egg safe mail slot that is located on the wall beside the office door that is located directly across from the library or
- 2) drop them in the wooden box that is located at the back of the sanctuary, to your left as you enter the sanctuary doors.

If you feel more comfortable not entering our building then of course you may drop them off through our mail slot located below our doorbell/entrance key pad.

Another alternative is of course is mailing your envelopes to the church.

Dear Padre,

Why are there such things in the world as “Coronavirus”? Why would God create such a thing?

Signed, Concerned Christian



Dear “Concerned Christian,”

This is an excellent question. It is a question that has plagued theologians ever since the invention of theology. Another way to put your question is this: “Why is there suffering in the world?” Some theologians would argue we live in an imperfect world because of sin. Some theologians argue that disease, natural disasters, and suffering is not what God intended, but because of sin our world is the way it is, plagued with such things.

Scientists would probably argue that outbreaks that spark pandemics are nature’s way of managing the human population. Scientists would no doubt argue that global pandemics are nothing new in history, that they emerge every so often. Pandemics are nature’s way of keeping the world in balance.

Now, I don’t know if either of these explanations is exactly helpful when we think of God’s relationship to Creation. Is it helpful to say that sin is responsible for pandemics? Probably not. And the follow-up question would be, “Why doesn’t God step in and do something about it?”

And is it helpful to say that pandemics are nature’s way of controlling human populations? Not really, although theoretically we can see how that makes sense. Theologically, though, what we are saying is that God allows pandemics so as to control human populations. Again, I don’t think that it is probably helpful, that is to say God allows pandemics.

So I don’t think I can give you a good answer to your question. And maybe, just maybe, this is where some of the anxiety we as a human race are experiencing right now, comes from. We are anxious not only because we are fearful about the disease, but we are also anxious because we can’t seem to make sense of it in light of our understanding of a good and gracious God.

But here is what I believe may be helpful regarding your question. Although, we can’t make sense of this outbreak of the Corona virus, we can make sense of our response to it. I believe that God loves us, and how we might see God’s love for us, is in our love for each other, particularly in the midst of crisis situations.

Do you know what Martin Luther, for example, did when a plague hit the town in which he was residing? Did he up and leave? No, he stayed and made himself available to those infected with the disease. Now, I am not saying that we all need to volunteer our help at hospitals. But, I have spoken to several of our members who have said that if there was anything they in particular could do for our other members and persons in need, please let them know. Sisters and brothers in Christ, that is a powerful example of God’s love.

I don’t know why things like the “Coronavirus” exist. I wish I had a good answer. But, I do know how we are to respond, and in our response, we know of God’s love for us and for all people.

Thanks for your question.

Signed, *Padre*

Council Minutes

Please Note: Council Minutes cannot be included in the newsletter until after Council has approved them. Here are the minutes from the meetings in February.

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Our Saviour Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting Wednesday, February 12, 2020

Members Present: Pastor Joel Petruschke, President John Zimmerman, Secretary Jessica Burigana, Kathy Sheetz, Marlee Zimmerman, Brad Neil, Anneke Fleming, Jim Lubrecht

Members Absent: Vice-President Herb Logan, Andrea Faber, Arno Miller

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:33pm. Pastor lead the group in a Valentine's Day devotion.

Minutes: No amendments were offered to the minutes. The minutes were approved as distributed.

Treasurer's Report: Jim reviewed the Treasurer's report with the council. He shared that \$4,150 has been raised to replace the heating units. \$2,000 of that is from last year's building fund. The rest comes from donations. The plan is to go ahead and purchase the two heaters needed for the youth room. Jim also shared that the congregation's giving is up. Brad made a motion to approve the treasurer's report. Pastor seconded this motion. Without objection, the motion carried.

Committee Reports:

Christian Education - No report. The group met in January and has agreed to serve as the Christian Ed. committee. The Christian Ed. committee consists of Marcia Schreffler (Chair), Kathy Sheetz, Tiffany Landis, Jessica Burigana, and Jenna Neil.

Fundraising - No report. Eggs have begun. Connie and Julie are co-chairing this committee.

Property - We would like to get an estimate for the light bulbs that need to be replaced throughout the church. Looking to add florescent tape to the curb out front to avoid hazards. The front door code has been changed and shared with all members. Otis Martin has agreed to take care of transporting the food donation gathered each week for the food pantry. Carol Ranck has volunteered to take over the church wishlist.

Welcome - No report.

Worship and Music - Report attached and made a part of the record.

Child Protection Policy - Report attached and made a part of the record.

Social Ministry - No report. The committee is looking into working with the Bethesda Mission for the Lenten Project. Donna will follow up and see what is needed most. The next Lunch Bunch will meet on April 25th at noon at Olive Garden.

Stewardship - No report.

Pastor's Report - Report attached and made a part of the record. Pastor highlighted a few things from his report. He also shared that the Martial Arts group has terminated their rental relationship.

Anneke made a motion to approve all committee reports. Kathy seconded this motion. Without objection, the motion carried.

Old Business:

Christian Ed. Committee Update - See notes under committee report.

By-Laws - We will continue to review the by-laws after the second service on Sundays. John will send out a schedule of dates and corresponding sections to be reviewed.

Organist Search Update - We are continuing to search for an organist/music director. We are hopeful to find someone to fill the position soon.

New Business:

Food Pantry Donations: The council was asked to consider alternating food donations between the Mana Food Pantry and the HANNA Food Pantry. The council feels this is appropriate.

Council reviewed the "Special Committees" section of the by-laws.

At 8:30, the meeting was adjourned. A motion was made by Anneke and seconded by Jessica. Without objection, the motion carried.

The next regular council meeting is to be held on March 12, 2020 at 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Burigana (Secretary)



Madalynn Brittelli	4/5
Lori Provencher	4/5
Ashley Brittelli	4/6
Isabella Kessler	4/7
Hope Bowling	4/9
Barbara Ecklund	4/13
Kevin Ecklund	4/14
George Sheleman	4/14
Toby Drake	4/15
Robert McIntyre	4/19
Dan Fleming	4/21
Herb Logan	4/25
Mary Petruschke	4/26
Randy Brittelli	4/27



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5 - Palm Sunday 8:30 am - Word & Sacrament 9:30 am - Sunday School 10:45 am - Word & Sacrament	6  Holy Week 6 pm - Praise Him Singers Rehearsal 6:30 pm - Welcome Committee	7	8	9 - Maundy Thursday 7:00 pm - Worship 	10 - Good Friday 7:00 pm - Worship 	11 7:30 pm - Easter Vigil @Good Shepherd
12 - Easter 7:00 am - Word & Sacrament 10:45 am - Word & Sacrament Easter Brunch	13 6 pm - Praise Him Singers Rehearsal	14 7:00 pm - Altar Guild	15 6:30 pm - Council	16	17	18
19 - Easter 2 8:30 am - Word & Sacrament 9:30 am - Sunday School 10:45 am - Word & Sacrament newsletter deadline	20 6 pm - Praise Him Singers Rehearsal	21	22	23	24	25 12 noon - Lunch Bunch @Olive Garden In-Betweeners "Murder at the Mansion"
26 - Easter 3 8:30 am - Word & Sacrament 9:30 am - Sunday School 10:45 am - Word & Sacrament	27 6 pm - Praise Him Singers Rehearsal	28 6:00 pm - Spiritual Stitches	29	30		

The Evangelical Lutheran
CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOUR
420 North Progress Avenue
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17109

Phone: 717-545-9992
Email: ossec@comcast.net
Web Site: www.oslutheranharrisburg.org



ALLELUIA!
CHRIST IS ALIVE!

Mission Statement

Our Saviour Lutheran Church, a caring congregation dedicated to the word of Christ, welcomes all people to worship and to grow with us as we share His love and salvation with our neighbors, our children and ourselves.

Worship

8:30 am & 10:45 am
Holy Eucharist is celebrated
every Sunday.
Sunday School 9:30 am

Church Office

9:00 am -12:00 pm Monday through
Friday

Phone: 717-545-9992
Email: ossec@comcast.net
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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.